

characterized herself whimsically as the coolly pragmatic complement to her mother's free-spirited daredevil.

"I suggested doing a zipline instead. She said that sounded like fun, that she hadn't thought of that before," added Hail, "and she calls up the next day and says she's going to jump the next day."

Hail decided that if she couldn't beat 'em, as the saying goes, that she would join 'em—on the ground as moral support, at any rate. So earlier this month, she accompanied her mother to the site of the Start Skydiving organization's site in Middletown, Ohio, where the big jump would take place.

What Hail saw when she got there didn't exactly bolster her confidence. She and Hieronymus watched as a group of skydivers went earlier in the day.

"The wind caught the chute of the last one coming in and rolled her over; it looked like a disaster waiting to happen," said Hail. "I point that out to my mother, and said, 'Did you see that?' and she responded, 'Well, she got up.'"

"I said, 'Mom, she's 20!'"

The winds picked up throughout the day; as the hours rolled along, it looked more and more like Hieronymus wouldn't be able to make the jump, but she refused to leave. After all, if she wanted to use the coupon her grandchildren had given her as a gift, it would have to be by Thanksgiving; that time in mid-October might have been her last opportunity to do so.

So Hieronymus held on to be in the last group to go up into the sky that day. The plane climbed to 12,000 feet before she was able to make the tandem jump with her instructor (they were connected to each other, but he was wearing the parachute).

"They put a jumpsuit on you and zip you up," Hieronymus explained. "Then they put the harness on you. Janie was there coaching."

Hieronymus took no apprehension with her into the airplane and left no regrets floating in the air. She made a successful jump and landed on the earthen floor no worse for the wear.

"No problems at all," she said. "I would do it again."

For Hieronymus, this was a "bucket list" item: Something she wanted to make sure and experience before she passed away, as referenced in the film called "The Bucket List." It certainly lived up to the expectations.

"When you come out of the plane, you do a free fall," said Hieronymus. "You see the earth below you, and it's amazing down there."

Her thoughts upon landing? "Oh shucks, I'm back on land."

Hieronymus laughed as she noted that she had a video of the event that she would show at her place of worship, First United Methodist Church, to entertain her friends there.

And despite Hail's skeptical nature, her mother's exploits have managed to serve as an inspiration.

"Oh my gosh, I felt younger," said Hail. "If an 85-year-old can do that, surely I'm not that old."

#### TRIBUTE TO EARL DEVANEY

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I rise today to give tribute to Mr. Earl Devaney, who will be retiring from 42 years of public service at the end of this year.

In an era when the American people have a record-level of distrust in government, Mr. Devaney has risen above partisanship as a staunch defender of

taxpayers and champion of government transparency.

Devaney started his career as a cop on the beat in Massachusetts. Then, Devaney went to work for the U.S. Secret Service until 1991, where he was the Special Agent-in-Charge of the agency's fraud division. In 1999, President Clinton appointed Devaney the inspector general of the Interior Department. There, he gained wide renown for overseeing the public corruption investigations that helped lead to the convictions of Jack Abramoff, a Washington superlobbyist and major beneficiary of the congressional earmark favor factory that polluted our politics for several decades. He also presided over the landmark investigation of the royalties program in the Minerals Management Service, finding a "culture of ethical failure" among public officials there, involving illegal gifts, illegal drug abuse, sexual misbehavior and more.

In his role as the chief watchdog of the Department of Interior, I got to know Earl and spent significant time visiting with him. What I have learned to appreciate about him was his honesty, integrity and forthrightness.

In February 2009, President Obama named Devaney to head the Recovery Board, which is charged with overseeing the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, ARRA. In this position, he was integral to making sure that the spending in the stimulus was as transparent as possible.

At the end of the year, Mr. Devaney will be resigning from three posts: the Chair of the Recovery Board, inspector general for the Department of the Interior, and Chairman of the Government Accountability and Transparency Board, the position that Vice President BIDEN appointed him to for managing the administration's efforts to reduce government waste and to provide "concrete methods" for improving oversight and transparency of Federal funds.

I can't think of a tougher defender of the interests of citizens and taxpayers in the Federal Government than Mr. Devaney. As one of the best inspectors general, his dogged pursuits of corruption and waste in government will be missed.

In his resignation letter to President Obama, Mr. Devaney thanked the President for the "opportunities you have given me to serve my country, and I will always look fondly on my decades as a public servant."

Mr. Devaney, the American people will also look fondly on years of public service. Thank you for all you have done.

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

##### RECOGNIZING ORONO MIDDLE SCHOOL

• Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, today I wish to offer my heartfelt and warm

congratulations to Orono Middle School in my State of Maine on being named a National Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education earlier this year on September 14, especially as the school community gathers to celebrate this milestone next week.

Since the inception of the National Blue Ribbon School Program in 1982, the U.S. Department of Education has undergone a rigorous, selective process of identifying those exceptional schools nationwide where students attain and maintain high academic goals. Needless to say, the bestowal of this well-earned, prestigious award speaks volumes about Orono Middle School's exemplary student accomplishments—and is an accolade in which all RSU 26 school board members, administrators, faculty, staff, and students—not to mention our entire State—can certainly take enormous pride.

This distinguished recognition also affords Orono Middle School with an ideal platform to share its outstanding teaching models and approaches under the vision of Principal Robert Lucy with other schools—an opportunity which aligns with the larger effort of the Department of Education to facilitate the robust exchange of the best school leadership and teaching practices.

Just as the Bangor region, where Orono is located, is the gateway to the natural wonders of the North Maine Woods and Acadia National Park, it is also a gateway to excellence in education. That is certainly the case at the university level at the University of Maine, my alma mater, as well as at the primary school level at Orono Middle School, where challenging and cultivating young minds is paramount; curiosity is prized; character is rewarded; enthusiasm is contagious; values are imparted; and an exuberant love of learning is palpable, even at times audible, and always ever-present.

Principal Lucy aptly characterized this spirit and energy when he wrote that "a visitor walking the halls hears parents conversing with teachers and students, actors exchanging lines, artists collaborating on projects, mathematicians solving team challenges, and coaches encouraging athletes. The sounds of our community make it clear that Orono Middle School thrives, largely because our students are connected to our school." And, thrive, it has, as Orono Middle School is exemplifying Maine's motto, "Dirigo" or "I Lead" and in doing so, ensuring that the seeds of hope for the next generation are firmly planted and taking root.

Orono Middle School is proof positive that our State's hallmark work ethic and can-do spirit are alive and well. Orono Middle School is a top-performing institution on State-required assessments, which teachers use to customize and improve instruction. Eighty percent of Orono Middle School's faculty have advanced degrees